

Poliomyelitis in the United States: 1952

The incidence of poliomyelitis in 1952 has been relatively high in comparison with the 2 years immediately preceding. From the last week of March, the time of the year when the fewest number of cases occur, to September 20, 34,281 cases were reported. For the same periods of 1950 and 1951, the totals were 18,283 and 17,802, respectively. The greatest number of cases ever reported was in 1949. From the last of March through the third week of September there were 30,253 cases. In that year the entire northeast part of the country, the west north central section, and some States in the west south central and Rocky Mountain areas had a relatively high incidence. The areas from which the majority of cases have been reported this year are quite different from the 1949 epidemic areas.

Texas was the first State to show a marked increase in incidence in 1952. From the last of March to the first week of June, the number of cases reported per week was about 40. A sudden increase began early in June, and the peak of incidence was reached in about 6 weeks. Since the second week of July, the number has declined. A total of 2,818 cases was reported in Texas from the last of March to the first of September, which is a record number for that State. The largest concentration of cases has been in Houston.

Other Southern States with relatively high rates in 1952 are Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma, and Kentucky. The number of cases reported since the last week in March exceeds that

for the same period of 1951 in each of the four States. Incidence was relatively high in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Oklahoma in 1951.

An epidemic of poliomyelitis has occurred in Iowa this year, with the greatest concentration of cases in the western part of the State. Sioux City has been the center of this outbreak which has also involved a few adjacent counties in Nebraska.

In Ohio, Illinois, and Michigan, the number of poliomyelitis cases reported has been relatively high. Wisconsin and Minnesota have also reported sizable numbers this summer.

There has been a relatively low incidence of the disease in the States along the Atlantic seaboard and in the Rocky Mountain area, except for New Mexico. The latter area experienced a severe outbreak in the summer of 1951, centering in Colorado, Utah, and Wyoming.

Although the peak of incidence appears to have been reached in the Southern States, by August 1 the number of cases was still increasing in the North up to the last week of the month. An earlier rise and an earlier peak is expected in the southern part of the country.

At the time of writing this report, it appears that the total number for 1952 may be in excess of the total for 1949, but it will be much greater than for 1950 or 1951. The total number reported in 1949 was 42,033; in 1950, 33,303; and in 1951, 28,395.

No reports have been received that would indicate anything unusual in the type of disease in 1952. Approximately the same proportion of reported cases have shown no paralysis, and the age distribution, judged by a few preliminary summaries submitted by a few States, has not been significantly different.

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